

## REMARKS

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gaither (U.S. 6,175,980) in view of McLaughlin (U.S. 5,979,078).

Claim 1 has been canceled and replaced by new independent claim 7.

Claim 7 recites "*A fluid-filled elastomeric bladder assembly ... comprising:*

*a first sheet of relatively thin elastomeric material;*

*a second sheet of relatively thick elastomeric material, said first and second sheets peripherally joined to form a closed bladder ... "*

It is respectfully submitted that neither Gaither nor McLaughlin disclose or suggest forming a single elastomeric bladder from two distinctly different (thickness) materials as is presently claimed. The use of different thickness materials suggested by McLaughlin (Column 4, lines 51 – 55) refers to two distinctly separate concentric bladders – inner bladder 15 and outer bladder 17.

Claim 7 further recites "*a port extending through the sheet defining said lower load bearing surface, said port adapted for fluid communication with a fluid pressure sensor; and*

*An interface panel disposed adjacent the load bearing surface (of the bladder) formed by the first (thin) sheet of elastomeric material."*

Neither of the applied references disclose or suggest a port extending through the sheet defining the lower load bearing surface (and thus located on the opposite side of the

bladder from the occupant) or an interface panel disposed between the first (thin) sheet of the bladder and, in application, the adjacent seat structure.

Claims 2 – 4 and 8 now depend, directly or indirectly, from independent claim 7, and are similarly distinguishable from the art of record for the reasons set forth herein above.

Furthermore, the Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion that Gaither discloses a similar range of thicknesses. Gaither does not contemplate a closed, fluid filled bladder constructed of sheet material of greatly divergent thickness. The range of thickness (1/4 to 1 inch) refers to the overall thickness of pad 42.

Accordingly, in view of the amendments, it is requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

#### Conclusion

Applicants believe, in view of the amendments and remarks herein, that all grounds of rejection have been addressed and overcome, and that all claims are in condition for allowance.

If it would further prosecution of the application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided.

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Amendment dated: 28-JUL-2005  
Response to Office Action of 06/01/2005

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication and/or credit any over payments to Deposit Account No. 50-0831.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Gordon Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Gordon Lewis  
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